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C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 BAGHDAD 004270

SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: ALLAWI ALLY ON FORMER PM'S EFFORT TO BUILD A COALITION FOR DECEMBER'S ELECTION

Classified By: Political Counselor Robert S. Ford for Reasons 1.4 (b) and (d).

1. (C) Summary. With the Conference of Centrists and Moderation underway, Allawi supporter and former Planning Minister Medhi Hafeedh has gathered a myriad of Sunni, Shia and Kurds that may possibly form alliances with Ayad Allawi for the December elections. Hafeedh reported that Allawi's political campaign organization is taking shape, citing a new director, established working committees and launch of a media campaign. Although Hafeedh expressed doubt that Shia Islamist parties have organized, he suggests that the recent corruption scandals naming Allawi allies are the work of Islamist parties, especially Ahmed Chalabi, to smear Allawi's reputation before the elections. End Summary.

Conference of Centrists and Moderation

2. (SBU) On October 17, Emboffs met with Chairman of the Iraqi Centre for Development & International Dialogue and former IIG Minister of Planning Dr. Mehdi Hafeedh. As the chief planner of Allawi's Conference of Centrists and Moderation, Hafeedh said he expects 700-800 participants to attend an October 17 conference in Baghdad. He labeled the conference the largest gathering of non-sectarian liberal democrats who will participate in the December 15 elections.

3. (SBU) Hafeedh said the conference planning committee worked hard to recruit a balanced list of speakers. In addition to Ayad Allawi, the 14 politicians scheduled are:

Nadeem al-Jabiri, Head of Fadeela Party
Hachem al-Hassani, TNA Speaker of the House (Sunni Independent)
Hossain al-Adili, Head of Democratic Islamic Trends
Hamid Moussa, Head of the Iraqi Communist Party
Shaikh Ghazi Ajeel al-Yawar, Tribal Sunni Independent
Adnan al-Pachachi, Independent Democrats Party
Wijdan, Iraqi National Accord
Mahmud Ali Othman, Kurdistan National Struggle Organization
Abdulillah an-Nasrawi, Arab Socialist Movement
Nasir al-Chaderchi, National Democratic Party
Rassim al-Awadi Iraqi National Accord
Izzet Shahbandar, Islamic Democratic Trend
Safia al-Suheil
Nasir al-Aani, Iraqi Islamic Party (Sunni)

Coalition building

4. (C) Hafeedh told Poloffs that even though a myriad of Sunni, Shia, Kurdish political parties have accepted conference invitations, there were no guarantees these parties would commit to joining Allawi's coalition now. He added that the conference was only the first step in forming alliances. Hafeedh claimed that Masoud Barzani expressed interest in helping Allawi's coalition. Hafeedh felt confident that there was enough time for Allawi to negotiate with prospective parties and secure commitments by the IECI coalition registration deadline of October 21st.

Allawi's campaign already in full swing

5. (C) By incorporating Sunni, Kurdish and Shia political figures, Allawi could bridge regional gaps, Hafeedh claimed. He admitted that this was one of the flaws of Allawi's last campaign. Hafeedh said that the Allawi camp also anticipates the December election campaign will be 18 separate elections in 18 governorates and that the Allawi list composition will vary substantially in each governorate.

6. (C) Hafeedh also stated that Allawi's group has already formed its campaign committees. Hafeedh reported that Allawi is implementing part of the media campaign by reaching out to friendly Arab governments and cited Allawi's upcoming visit to Turkey.

17. (C) Hafeedh admitted to Poloffs that Allawi's team plans to be ready to register by October 21st IECI deadline. Hafeedh said that he expects that the Shia Islamists will not be ready to form a unified list again by October 21. Dawa and Moqtada al-Sadr likely will form an alliance, he speculated, but they may not make the October 21 deadline. He said he also expects Ayatollah al-Sistani would not endorse any one list, making it more difficult for Shia to form alliances.

Smear Campaign already in play

18. (C) When asked about recent arrest warrants issued for ministers who worked for Allawi, Hafeedh said this was a sure sign of political manipulation by both Islamists, and especially Ahmed Chalabi, to stain Allawi's campaign. He cited the lack of transparency with the investigation and suggested that an accounting company like KPMG Peat Marwick conduct a formal audit of the alleged financial corruption. Hafeedh insisted that TNA member and head of SCIRI's Badr Organization, Abdel Hadi al-Amari, is behind the campaign to slap Allawi ex-ministers with corruption charges.

Comment

19. (C) We will report further on the Allawi coalition building effort as we gather more information. We caution that the coalition has not solidified much apart from the Communists signing up. On the positive side, NDI's Iraq director, who helped Allawi reach out to other parties during the summer, told us October 17 that Allawi's campaign organization is starting to take shape. He said it has far to go, but it is well ahead of where it was going into the January 2005 election.
Khalilzad